belong to SC/ST community;

(c) whether there is reservation of SC/ST on the post of Ambassador/High Commissioners; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) Presently 105 Heads of Mission (Ambassadors/High Commissioners/Permanent Representatives) are in place in various Indian missions abroad.

(b) 15 belong to the SC/ST communities (SC: 9 and ST: 6).

(c) No Sir.

(d) Posts of Heads of Missions are filled by the Government by appointment of members of the Indian Foreign Service or any other person on functional grounds taking into account the experience and suitability of a person. Consequently a policy of reservation is not followed.

Delay in Issuing Passports

3900. SHRI ANANT RAM JAISWAL:
SHRI RAM GOPAL YADAV:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the average time taken to issue a passport in the normal course;

(b) whether the passport offices at Delhi, Chandigarh, Jallandar, Jaipur, Lucknow and Patna exceeded the normal time in the issuance of passports; and

(c) if so, the number of cases where the issuance of passports were delayed stating reasons therefor and the measures taken to avoid unnecessary delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) There is no standard average time for issue of a passport in the normal course because the time taken to issue a passport varies between different passport offices depending on the staff strength and the workload at different points of time.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Sino-Indian Boundary Issue

3901. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been any headway so far in Sino-Indian talks for solution of the boundary question; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) and (b) Discussions on the boundary question between India and China are held in the India-China Joint Working Group set up in December, 1988 for this purpose. The Joint Working Group has held six meetings so far, the sixth meeting being held in New Delhi on June 25—28, 1993. In the meetings of the Joint Working Group, both sides have sought to narrow their differences on the boundary question in order to arrive at a fair, just and mutually acceptable solution. They have also made progress in their discussions on measures that could be taken to enhance mutual confidence and ensure peace and tranquillity along the line of actual control.

ताशकन्द में भारतीय ध्वज का उल्टा फहराया जाना

3902. श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह : क्या विदेश मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या यह सच है कि 25 मई, 1993 को प्रधानमंत्री की ताशकन्द यात्रा के समय भारतीय ध्वज उल्टा फहर रहा था;

(ख) क्या इस संबंध में प्रधान मंत्री जी ने भी अपनी नाराजगी व्यक्त की थी;

(ग) इस अशोभनीय कार्य का क्या कारण था तथा इसके लिए दोषी पाए गए व्यक्तियों के नाम क्या हैं; और

(घ) क्या इस संबंध में कोई कार्यवाही की गई है?

विदेश मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री सलमान खुर्शीद) : (क) से (ग) ताशकन्द स्थित भारत के राजदूतावास ने उजबेकिस्तान के विदेश मंत्रालय को एक औपचारिक मौखिक टिप्पण देकर यह बताया था कि भारत के राष्ट्रीय ध्वज को किस तरह फहराया जाना चाहिए । तथापि, 25 मई, 1993 को 05.15 बजे हमारे दूतावास के दो अधिकारियों ने यह देखा कि ताशकन्द हवाई अड्डे पर भारतीय ध्वज को उल्टा फहराया जा रहा है । उन्होंने तत्काल अधिकारियों का ध्यान इस ओर आकृष्ट किया था और उक्त अधिकारियों ने तुरन्त ही भूल का सुधार किया था । यह घटना 3 घण्टे बाद 08.30 बजे प्रधान मंत्री को दिए गए विदाई समारोह से काफी पहले घटी थी ।

(घ) प्रश्न नहीं उठता ।